

But at the laste thus he spak, and seyde:
My brother dere, I may thee do no more.
What shulde I seyn? I hate, ywis, Criseyde!
And God wot, I wol hate hir evermore!
And that thou me bisoughtest doon of yore,
Havyng unto myn honour ne my reste
Right no reward, I dide al that thee leste.

If I dide ought that mighte lyken thee,
It is me leef; and of this treson now,
God woot, that it a sorwe is unto me!
And dredelees, for hertes ese of yow,
Right fayn wolde I amende it, wiste I how.
And fro this world, almighty God I preye,
Delivere hir sone; I can no more seye.

Gret was the sorwe and pleynt of Troilus;
But forth hir cours fortune ay gan to holde.
Crisseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus,
And Troilus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world; whoso it can biholde,
In eche estat is litel hertes reste;
God leve us for to take it for the beste!

In many cruel batayle, out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
As men may in this olde bokes rede,
Was sene his knighthod and his grete might.
And dredelees, his ire, day and night,
ful cruelly the Grekes ay aboughte;
And alwey most this Diomed he soughte.

And ofte tyme, I finde that they mette
With bloody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hir speres weren whette;
And God it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus upon his helm to bete.
But natheles, fortune it nought ne wolde,
Of others hond that either deyen sholde.

And if I hadde ytaken for to wryte
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than wolde I of his batailles endyte.
But for that I to wryte first bigan
Of his love, I have seyde as that I can.
His worthy dedes, whoso list hem here,
Reed Dares, he can telle hem alle yfere.

Bisechinge every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil womman, what she be,
That al be that Criseyde was untrewed,
That for that gilt she be not wrooth with me.
Ye may hir gilt in othere bokes see;
And gladlier I wol wryten, if yow leste,
Penelope's trouthe and good Alceste.

Ne I sey not this alonly for thise men,
But most for wommen that bitrayssed be
Through false folk; God yewe hem sorwe, amen!
That with hir grete wit and subtiltee
Bitrayse yow! and this comveeth me
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye!

Go, litel book, go litel myn tregedie,
Ther God thy maker yet, er that he dye,
So sende might to maken som comedie!
But litel book, no making thou nenvye,
But subgit be to alle poesye;
And his the steppes, wheras thou seest pace
Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

And for ther is so greet diversitee
In English and in wryting of our tonge,
So preye I God that noon miswryte thee,
Ne thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.
And red wherso thou be, or elles songe,
That thou be understonde I God beseche!
But yet to purpos of my rather speche.

The wraththe, as I began yow for to seye,
Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere;
for thousandes his hondes maden deye,
As he that was withouten any pere,
Save Ector, in his tyme, as I can here.
But weylaway, save only Goddes wille,
Dispitously him slough the fiers Achille.

And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
In convers letinge every element;
And ther he saugh, with ful ayvsement,
The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erthe, that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan despyse
This wretched world, and held al vanitee
To respect of the pleyn felicitie
That is in hevne above; and at the laste,
Ther he was slayn, his loking down he caste;

And in himself he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste;
And dampned al our werk that folweth so
The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,
And sholden al our herte on hevne caste.
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurie sorted him to dwelle.

Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love,
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse;
Swich fyn hath his estat real above,
Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse;
Swich fyn hath false worldes brotelnesse.
And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde,
As I have told, and in this wyse he deyde.

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repeyeth hoom from worldly vanitee,
And of your herte upcasteth the visage
To thilke God that after his image
Yow made, and thinketh al nis but a fayre
This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

And loveth him, the which that right for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to beve,
first starf, and roos, and sit in hevne above;
for he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes,
Lo here, what alle hir goddes may availle;
Lo here, these wretched worldes appetytes;
Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille
Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars of swich rascaille!
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye hir bokes seche.

O moral Gower, this book I directe

To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benigneities and zeles gode.
And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy ever I preye;
And to the Lord right thus I speke and seye:

Thou oon, and two, and three, eteme on lyve,
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Ancircumscrip, and al mayst circumscrip,
As from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everichoon,
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace digne,
for love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!

Amen.

Explicit Liber Troili et Criseydis.



Kelmscott